

CONFIDENTIAL

RMIR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

**Memorandum of Conversation**

DATE: May 31, 1957

SUBJECT: Tunisia

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Carlo Perrone-Capano, Counselor, Italian Embassy  
Mr. Leo G. Cyr - AFN

COPIES TO: AFN, NEA, Amembassies Tunis, Paris, Rabat, Rome, Moscow.

Mr. Perrone came to my office this morning at his own request to inform the Department, on instructions from his Foreign Office, that it had learned from reliable sources that the Soviet Union had offered to enter into a commercial agreement with Tunisia. According to the same sources the Tunisian reaction was not to preclude entirely the prospect of negotiating such an agreement. The Tunisian Government did, however, inform the Soviets that it wished first to complete its discussions with the U.S. Government on the subject of U.S. economic aid to Tunisia before considering the desirability of a commercial agreement with the Soviet Union.

DC/R  
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NEA:AFN:LG Cyr:at

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AUG 16 1957

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461.7241/5-3157

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461.7241/5-3157

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OUTGOING  
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Classification

1957 JUN 28 PM 5 49

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SENT TO: Amembassy TUNIS

602

RPTD INFO: Amembassy PARIS

5278

65172/6-2057

Origin

Info:

Re Paris 6516 rptd Tunis 318.

Dept interested verification and implications expected Soviet  
economic mission Tunis. Reply soonest.

*Herter*  
ACTING  
(12PT)

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461.7241/6-2857

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(Offices  
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Drafted by:

OIR/DFI: PCHabib:jp 6-28-57

Telegraphic transmission and  
classification approved by:

OIR/DFI: RPTerrill RPT

Clearances:

DRN - Lewis *W*

IAD *huf*

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NEA/AFN - Norland (in substance) *jp*

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JUN 28 1957 P.M.

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*Department of State*

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53  
Action  
OLIControl: 2075  
Rec'd: July 3, 1957  
1:54 p.m.Info  
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FROM: Tunis

TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 7, July 2.

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SENT DEPARTMENT 7, REPEATED PARIS 6, MOSCOW 1.

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Re DEPTTEL 602.

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Abdallah Farhat, Director Prime Minister Cabinet, told me USSR some weeks ago inquired via Tunisian Embassy Paris whether GOT would sell Soviets 2000 tons olive oil for payment in US dollars. (See EMBTEL 751 and EMBDESP 527 re Soviet interest). GOT, having large unsold stocks olive oil, replied affirmatively but has heard nothing since from Soviets. If transaction takes place, Farhat says GOT hopes Soviet representative will come here to decide re quality olive oil but GOT does not consider this deal anything more than cash sale. Farhat implied it would not involve any strengthening Soviet-Tunisian relations.

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461.7241/7-557

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CORRECTION ISSUED:  
7/9/57, 8:30 a.m., SW

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FROM: Tunis - CORRECTED PAGE 1

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 22, July 6, 1 p.m.

Control: 3782  
Rec'd: July 6, 1957  
1:01 p.m.

001

SENT DEPARTMENT 22, REPEATED INFORMATION MOSCOW 2, PARIS 20, TRIPOLI 4, RABAT 3.

Reference: (A) Department's 602; (B) Embassy's EMBTEL 7 to Department, repeated Paris 6, Moscow 1.

1. Press announces scheduled arrival here today USSR delegation consisting following names: Bakhtov, president of delegation; Dashkevitch, Commercial Counselor Soviet Embassy Paris; Lapaev, Miss Cheomeikina, secretary; and Miassikov, interpreter in Soviet Embassy Tripoli.

2. One well-placed Tunisian official (chief foreign exchange office) told Embassy officer intention was to negotiate trade and payments agreement comparable to recently signed Yugoslav and Egyptian agreements; explained Franco-Soviet agreement concluded several months ago contained no provisions for Tunisian and Moroccan trade with Soviet. Consequently Morocco concluded separate agreement with Soviet several weeks ago and "now it is our turn". Stated Tunisian delegation not yet formed.

3. Another equally well-placed Tunisian Bourguiba's Chef de Cabinet for economic affairs subsequently informed Embassy original intention was merely negotiate single sale olive oil (reference B). Admits possibility now exists negotiations may acquire broader character but believes matter remains uncertain. Promised keep us informed.

4. Third official Chief Economic Affairs in Foreign Office stated first meeting with Soviet delegation will begin this afternoon to study trade possibilities. Thereafter decision will be made as to type of agreement appropriate under circumstances.

Embassy comment: Above conflicting views of leading trade officials lead Embassy suspect USSR in sending four-man delegation may have deliberately taken GOT by surprise in order take advantage latter's current desire negotiate independent trade agreements.

Presence

Correction  
by RM/R

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FROM: Tunis

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 22, July 6, 1 p.m.

Control: 3782

Rec'd: July 6, 1957  
1:01 p.m.

SENT DEPARTMENT 22, REPEATED INFORMATION MOSCOW 2, PARIS 20, TRIPOLI 4, RABAT 3.

Reference: (A) Department's 602; (B) Embassy's (#)

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Presence

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-2- 22, July 6, 1 p.m., from Tunis

Presence large delegation with attendant publicity may be intended force GOT's hand and bring about conclusion full trade agreement.

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AUG 2 - 1955



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16 Department of State

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Control: 8230  
Rec'd: JULY 15, 1957  
5:01 AM

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FROM: TUNIS

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 41, JULY 14

SENT DEPARTMENT 41; REPEATED INFORMATION PARIS 38, MOSCOW 3,  
RABAT 6,

TUNIS PRESS ANNOUNCES SIGNING TUNIS JULY 13 SOVIET TUN  
COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT REPORTELY TO COVER EXCHANGE BARTER BASIS  
TOTALING ON BILLION 300 MILLION FRANCS WORTH PRODUCTS--  
TUNISIA TO EXPORT OLIVE OIL, CORK, CITROUS FRUITS, WOOL  
DATES HANDICRAFTS IN RETURN FOR SOVIET WOOD PAPER OIL IRON  
CHEMICAL GLASS PRODUCTS MACHINE TOOL ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT.  
TUN FO ECONOMIC OFFICER ALI BANNOUR SIGNED FOR TUNS IN PRESENCE  
OTHER TUN NEGOTIATORS WELL AS CHIEF PROTOCOL BAHRI AND  
FO INFO OFFICER: HEAD OF SOV DEL BAKHTOV SIGNED FOR SOVS.  
AFTER USUU PLEASANTRIES SOVS PRESENTED TUNS WITH LEATHER  
CASED CAMERAS AS PRODUCTS SOV INDUSTRY. EARLIER IN DAY PRIMIN  
BOURGUIBA RECEIVED SOV DEL WHO GAVE HIM FILM OF TUN INDEPENDENCE  
DAY CELEBRATIONS IN MARCH TAKEN BY SOV REPS PRESENT THAT  
OCCASION.

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1957 JUL 15 PM 1 38

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Entry: EETrade  
Box: 1995

TAB #: 11  
1/13/c

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File Designation

461.7241/7-1857

Disp 32 w/encl

Date

18 Jul 57

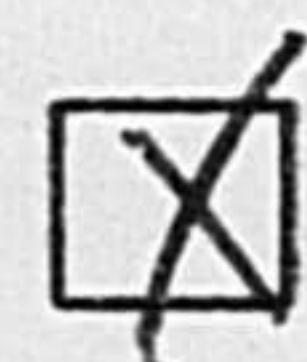
From

Tunis

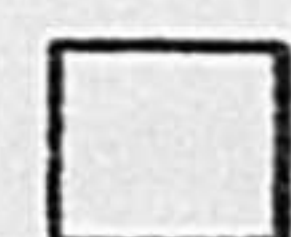
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Authority

6/25/91  
Date JAA

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Control:  
Rec'd:

13517  
July 23, 1957  
10:23 a.m.

FROM: Tunis

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 58, July 23, 11 a.m.

SENT DEPARTMENT 58, REPEATED INFORMATION PARIS 49, RABAT 12, MOSCOW 4.

Reference Embassy despatch 32; EMBTEL 41; EMBTEL 22 ✓

1. Embassy glad report purported text Tunisian-Soviet trade agreement transmitted under despatch 32 of July 1 is not (repeat not) true text. Transmitted text however may have been draft proposed by Russians. If so, GOT must be given credit for reducing scope of agreement.

2. Tunisian Foreign Office unwilling release text recent agreements with Yugoslavia, Egypt and USSR to foreign embassies prior official publication. Publication promised within few days.

3. Tnani, Chief Tunisian Foreign Exchange Office informed Embassy officer negotiations were held at request Soviet Government which refused include Moroccan and Tunisian trade within framework Franco-Soviet negotiations as in past in view newly acquired independence these countries.

4. Same source added Soviet agreement includes only small amount POL none of which consists gasoline. Spurious text included 75,000 tons POL of which 20,000 gasoline.

5. Tnani also mentioned agreement provides for clearing account with only fifty million franc swing credit.

6. See also paragraph 9 of EMBTEL 53. ✓

RSP:DEM/7

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RG:59  
Entry:EE Trade  
Box:1995

TAB #: (11A)  
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461-7241/7-3157

Date

Desp 47 w/rnc/  
31 Jul 57

From

Tunis

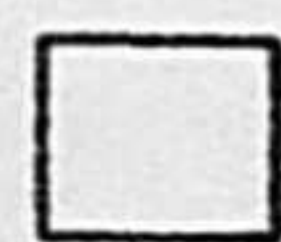
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Control: 9814  
Rec'd: February 17, 1958  
10:12 a.m.

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FROM: Tunis

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 978, February 17.

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SENT DEPARTMENT 978, REPEATED INFORMATION PARIS 699.

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L'ACTION of February 17 carries interview with four Soviet commercial representatives in Tunis (Mr. W. I. Dimitriev, Konstantin K. Parmenov, Mr. Pouchov, and Miss Goreovaa.

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Soviet delegation quoted as saying they have set up offices in Majestic Hotel and have rented villa in residential section Tunis where four or five persons will be installed as permanent Soviet Trade delegation.

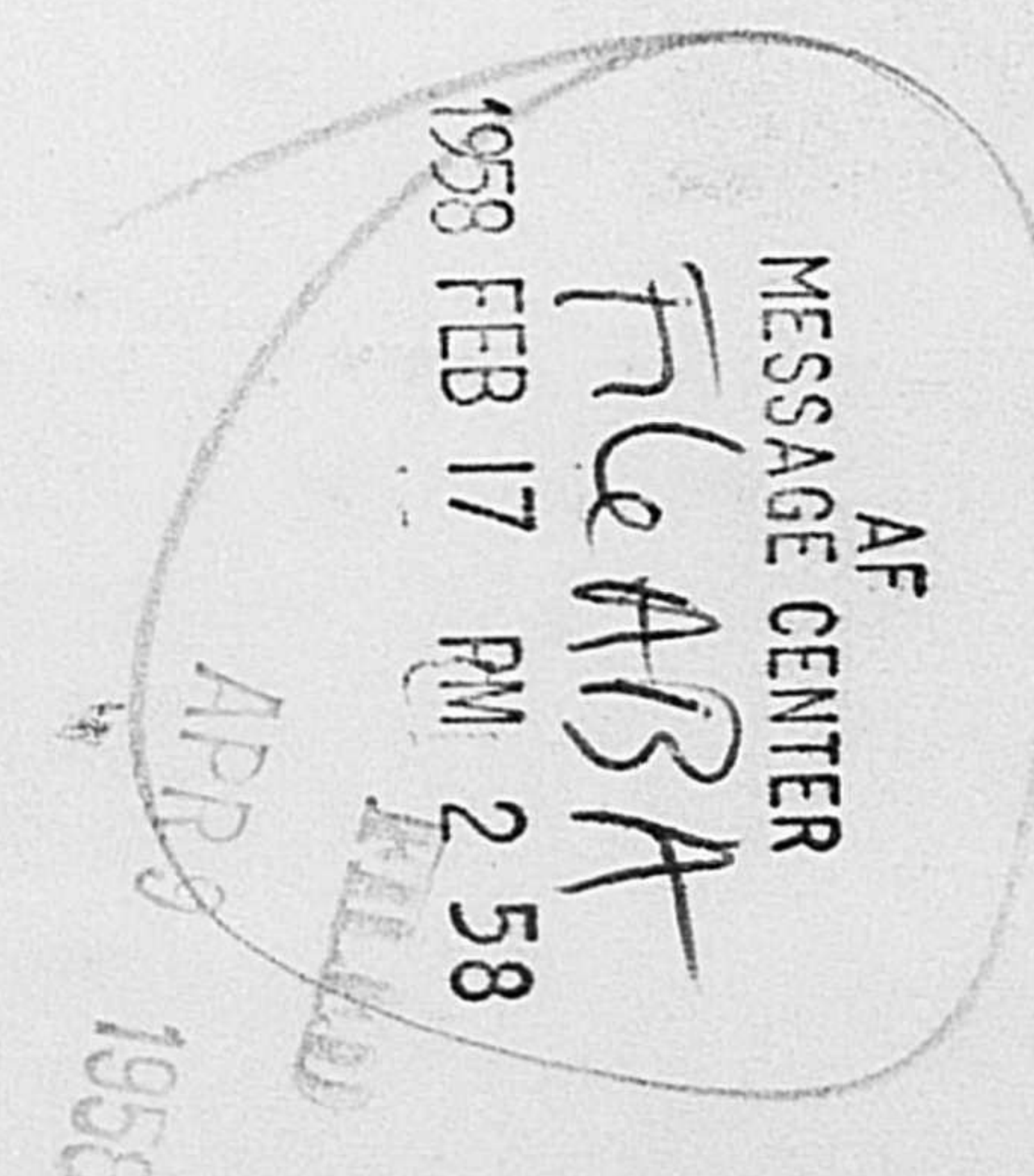
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PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGESDate Sent: November 10, 1958  
Rec'd:

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FROM: Ambassador TUNIS

TO: Secretary of State

NO: G-137

RPTD: Ambassadors LONDON  
MOSCOW  
PARISSoviet Trade Delegation

1. Soviet "trade delegation" headed by Alexei Shvedov, Chief African Dept Soviet Foreign, left Tunis November 1 as quietly as they had arrived (Rittel 6:2), apparently without achieving any success re establishment Soviet diplomatic mission in Tunis. Tun press ignored visit, evidently at Tun Information Secretariat's request. Sove apparently were not rpt not received by any Tunis of Cabinet rank; highest ranking Tun official they contacted was Honneur of Tun Foreign Office. Tun officials not rpt not willing go very far in discussion Shvedov visit, so it impossible know whether or how Sove raised question establishment Sov Embassy. Tun line is delegation was strictly a commercial one whose visit coincided with Tun International Fair. GAS has report that if approached by Sove, GOF would allow Sove establish five man mission here.

2. GOF seems to be backing away from allowing Sove establish themselves here in immediate future. Director of National Security hints Tunis do not rpt not want extra security problems at time when Nasser can be expected try cause trouble. For present at least, we know of no rpt no strong pressures here for closer Tun relations with Soviet Union. Judge matter will be left in abeyance until GOF feels it can make right kind political capital out of move.

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Control: 4555  
Rec'd: January 9, 1959  
2:40 p.m.

FROM: Tunis  
TO: Secretary of State  
NO: 948, January 9, 5 p.m.

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SENT DEPARTMENT 948, REPEATED INFORMATION LONDON 219, PARIS 487

1. Official Tunisian press today headlines GOT communique reporting separate receptions "Chiefs Soviet (Constantine Parmenov) and Czech (Franticek Cada) commercial missions" by Tunisian Finance and Commerce SECT Ahmed Mestiri. Cada reportedly also took opportunity present his successor Francois Kindl. Although no official comment made re meeting, "informal sources" in EL AMAL quoted as saying "talks concerned commercial exchanges between Tunisia and two countries and possibility extending these exchanges".

2. Comment: Have no reason believe talks involved other subjects since we know from other diplomatic missions here that GOT now almost frantically searching for larger guaranteed export outlets outside franc zone (paragraph 3, EMBTEL 940). For example, Tunisians have pressed West Germans hard agree buy increased quantities Tunisian products. German Ambassador says so far Tunisians having little success with either Germans or other Western countries because of high price, limited appeal and low quality (phosphates) most Tunisian products.

3. Point of particular interest re above announcement is fact GOT has not publicized similar contacts with non-Communist missions. Furthermore, Tunisians have generally avoided official contact with Soviet and Czech trade missions here, let alone publicizing them. Possible Soviets and Czechs will for political purpose agree purchase at good price larger amounts Tunisian products such as olive oil and phosphates which difficult sell elsewhere. In process they can be expected extract maximum political advantage.

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AIR POUCH

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## FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : TUNIS

546

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

January 28, 1959

DATE

REF : Embtel 1013; CERP, D-I-A-6

67 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
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	7/2	CA-10 USIA-10 AG-8 IN-7 TR-3 FRB-3

SUBJECT: Tunisian-USSR Trade Remains at Low Ebb Despite Mikoyan Statement

The January 20th edition of Es-Sabah, Tunisia independent Arabic daily, carried the text of an interview accorded the journal's UN correspondent, Sami Aziz, by Anastas Mikoyan, Soviet Vice Premier in which the latter was quoted as having said inter alia, "The USSR would be truly happy to see diplomatic relations established with Tunisia- especially since commercial relations now in progress are evolving favorably".

Despite the Soviet leader's claim, the most recent GOT statistics do not reveal any marked blossoming in Tunisian-USSR commerce. Although Tunisian exports for the first nine months of 1958 (121,815 dinars\*) more than doubled over those of the corresponding period of 1957 (51,851 dinars), Tunisian imports for the first three quarters of 1958 declined to 224,517 dinars as compared to 438,889 dinars for the first three quarters of 1957. Thus the USSR continues to have a favorable trade balance with Tunisia. By far the principal Tunisian import from the USSR has been fuel oil whereas the main Tunisian export is cork. A table showing this trade in detail is enclosed.

During December "Le Petit Matin", semi official Tunis paper, carried a series of advertisement of "Sudoimport", Soviet ship import combine of Moscow, offering ships of all sizes from small trawlers to large tankers under the caption, "Do you Need Ships", Embassy Despatch 451 of Dec. 16, 1958. Other than this and the rumored offering by the Soviet Commercial Mission in Tunis of machine tools at bargain prices, the Embassy has no knowledge of any particular Soviet economic effort directed toward Tunisia.

\* \$1.00 = 0.420 dinar

*G. Lewis Jones*  
G. Lewis Jones  
American Ambassador

Enclosure: Tunisian-USSR trade.

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FEB 19 1959

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Page 1 of  
Encl. No. 1  
Desp. No. 546  
From TUNIS
IMPORTS FROM THE U.S.S.R.

Item	FIRST 9 MONTHS 1957		FIRST 9 MONTHS 1958	
	Quantity (in kilo- grams)	Value (in :1000 francs) : or dinars	Quantity (in kilo- grams)	Value (in :1000 francs) : or dinars
Caviar	3	11	-	6
Salmon	3	6	-	-
Shell-fish	7,862	6,398	682	661
Gasoline	7,282,564	157,193	513,104	9,771
Gas oil	5,163,546	100,157	2,826	40
Fuel oil (domestic)	2,071,206	35,191	-	-
Fuel oil (light)	39,442	604	28,017	275
Fuel oil (heavy)	11,504,288	138,971	15,109,190	123,449
Earthenware	3,384	320	-	-
Motors	9	7	-	-
Radio sets (2)	50	31	-	-
Lumber	-	-	99,890	9,551
Plywood	-	-	1,339,541	47,976
Cotton goods	-	-	57,638	28,686
Glassware	-	-	7,500	243
Heaters (kerosene)	-	-	7,609	1,837
Heaters (parts)	-	-	826	698
Cooking utensils	-	-	1,840	499
Pencils	-	-	2,700	825
Totals		438,889		224,517

EXPORTS TO THE U.S.S.R.

Item	FIRST 9 MONTHS 1957		FIRST 9 MONTHS 1958	
	Quantity (in kilo- grams)	Value (in :1000 francs) : or dinars	Quantity (in kilo- grams)	Value (in :1000 francs) : or dinars
Cork	1,001,000	51,851	1,434,000	74,236
Lemons	-	-	328,635	23,050
Lamb skins	-	-	36,701	14,450
Goat skins	-	-	22,454	10,079
Totals		51,851		121,815

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Control: 8038

Rec'd: September 11, 1959  
2:46 p.m.

FROM: Tunis

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 363, September 11.

SENT DEPARTMENT 363; REPEATED INFORMATION PARIS 177, RABAT  
UNNUMBERED.

Tunis press today gave front page treatment arrival Soviet  
delegation for purpose renewal commercial agreement with  
Tunisia which expired June 30. Delegation headed by Pankratov  
(FNU) Deputy Minister Foreign Commerce and included: FNU Kouzmine,  
FNU Fychikov and Constantin Parmenov permanent Soviet trade repre-  
sentative in Tunis. Group was greeted at airport by Tunisian  
finance and commerce secretary Mestiri and other Tunisian officials.  
Negotiations to begin tomorrow. In 1958 Tunisian imports from  
USSR were 247,000 dinars and exports were 274,000 dinars.  
Figures for 1957 were imports 457,000 dinars and exports  
205,000 dinars respectively.

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FROM: Tunis  
TO: Secretary of State  
NO: 370, September 14.

Control: 9582  
Rec'd: September 14, 1959  
4:08 p.m.

SENT DEPARTMENT 370, REPEATED INFORMATION PARIS 181, RABAT  
UNNUMBERED.

Re: Embassy telegram 363.

Tunis press today continues coverage on Tunisian-Soviet trade negotiations now taking place. Semi-official LE PETIT MATIN notes accord will be first Tunisia has negotiated since conclusion new Franco-Tunisian financial and commercial conventions. Tunisian negotiators include experts in fields of finance, commerce, banking, mining and agriculture. Indications received by Embassy point to provisions for substantial increase in Tunisian-Soviet trade.

MCKILLOP

RKF:9

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## FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : TUNIS

173

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

September 21, 1959

DATE

REF : CERP, D-I-A-6.

16 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D 9/28	IN F O R M A T I O N O T H E R

*Moscow-1 Paris-1 Rabat-1*  
*Rm/R-2 REP-1 L-2 AF-5 EUR-5 IRC-8 ICA-11*  
*Com-12 CIA-15 TR-3 TAR-2 OSD-2 IN-3 AG-8*  
*USIA-4 FRB-3*  
*Army-4 Navy-3 Air-1*

SUBJECT: NEW TUNISIAN-SOVIET COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT

On September 19 a new Tunisian-Soviet commercial agreement of one year's duration was signed in Tunis to replace a previous accord which expired on June 30, 1959. Although there have been some increases in the quantities or values of products exchanged between the two countries, it would not appear that any substantial augmentation of Soviet-Tunisian trade will result from this new agreement, although open-end quotas are established for Tunisian import of Soviet heavy capital equipment.

According to La Presse of September 19 the volume of exchanges between the two countries under the new agreement will reach one million dinars (1) as compared to the 500,000 dinars under the previous agreement (actually in 1958 Tunisian imports from the USSR were 247,000 dinars and exports to the Soviet Union were 274,000 dinars).

Secretary of State for Finance and Commerce Ahmed Mestiri in a statement to the press following the signature of the new accord said that "the augmentation of exchanges constitutes a stone in the construction of the edifice of friendship between our two countries".

There follows below a comparison of the exchanges under the old and new commercial agreements:

(1) one dinar = U.S. \$2.38

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461.7241/9-2159

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SEP 26 1959

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SEP 28 58 VW 10 32

Matches

Anthracite

Clocks and watches

(1) Open-end quotas.

P.M. (1)

30,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars

10,000 dinars



Imports from USSR to Tunisia

	1958 agreement	1959 agreement
Planks (bois sciés)	15,000 cubic meters	20,000 cubic meters
Rough timber and pit props	35,000 cubic meters	35,000 cubic meters
Paper	500 tons	500 tons
Petroleum products	20,000 tons	20,000 tons
fuel oil:	P.M. (1)	40,000 tons
gasoline:	P.M. (1)	
gasoil:		
Ferrous metals	2,000 tons	2,000 tons
Machines and equipment	50,000 dinars	100,000 dinars
Electrical equipment	20,000 dinars	20,000 dinars
Tools	10,000 dinars	10,000 dinars
Chemical and pharmaceutical products	Chemicals: 20,000 dinars Pharmaceuticals: P.M. (1)	20,000 dinars (with increase possible)
Cotton and other textiles	4 million meters	5 million meters
Window glass	100,000 square meters	100,000 square meters
Miscellaneous products and quota for Soviet exhibit at the Tunis International Fair	200,000 dinars	170,000 dinars (miscellaneous) 30,000 dinars (Fair)
Heavy capital equipment	-	P.M. (1)
Matches	-	30,000 dinars
Anthracite	-	10,000 tons
Bicycles	-	P.M. (1)
Clocks and watches	-	P.M. (1)

(1) Open-end quota.



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Desp. No. 173  
From TUNIS

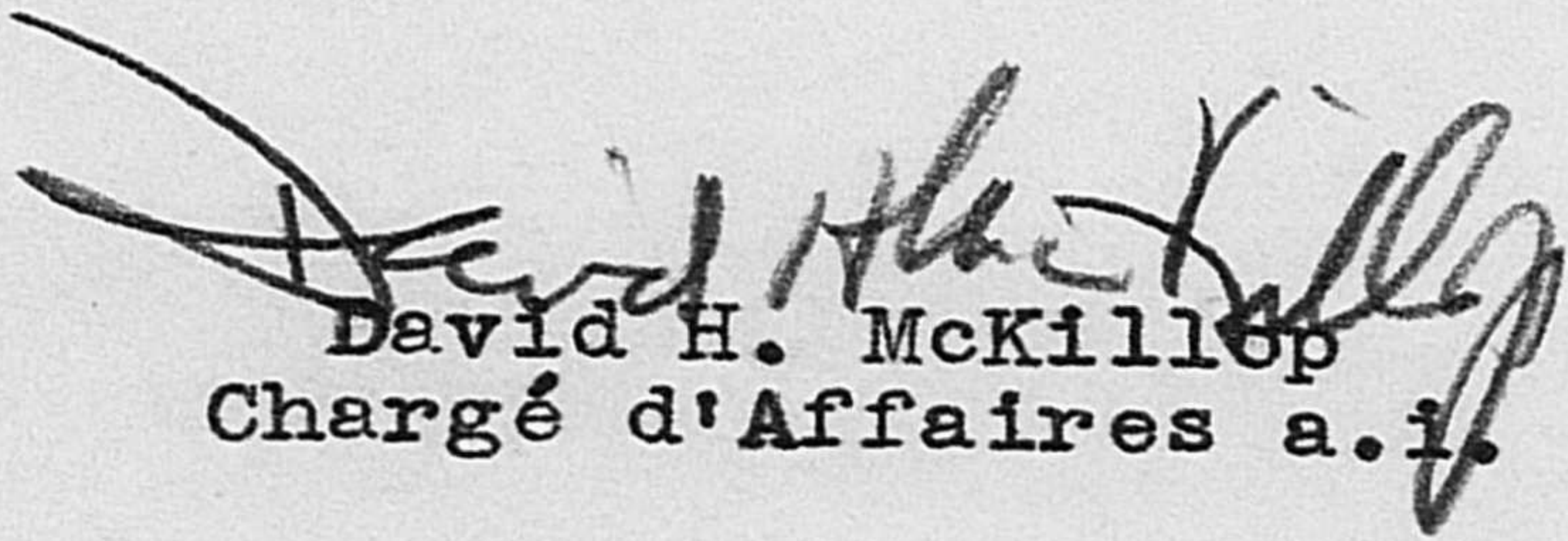
Exports to USSR

	<u>1958</u> <u>agreement</u>	<u>1959</u> <u>agreement</u>
Cork	1,000 tons	1,500 tons
Dates	P.M. (1)	P.M. (1)
Citrus	3,000 tons	3,000 tons
Almonds	50 tons	100 tons
Olive oil	2,000 tons	2,500 tons
Goat and sheep skins	100,000 dinars	100,000 units
Washed wool	50 tons	100 tons
Sponges	P.M. (1)	3 tons
Miscellaneous	80,000 dinars	140,000 dinars
Handicrafts	-	P.M. (1)
Shoes	-	P.M. (1)

(1) Open-end quota.

Clearing, as in the case of the previous agreement, will be by means of bilateral compensation which does not envisage transfer of gold or foreign exchange. The agreement provides for a swing credit, the amount of which has not been made public. Central banks of the two countries will maintain records of the transactions under the trade agreement.

Comment will follow by separate despatch.

  
David H. McKillop  
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

cc: USOM/Tunis

Department please pass to: Moscow, Paris, Rabat.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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35  
Action  
AF

FROM: TUNIS

Control: 14729  
Rec'd: SEPTEMBER 22, 1959  
1:30 AM

Info

TO: Secretary of State

SS

NO: 409, SEPTEMBER 22, 7 PM

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SENT DEPARTMENT 409, REPEATED PARIS 198, RABAT UNNUMBERED

TUNISIAN-SOVIET COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT, REPLACING PREVIOUS ACCORD WHICH EXPIRED JUNE 30, SIGNED SEPTEMBER 19. VOLUME OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY INCREASED AND SOME NEW ITEMS ADDED. MOST SIGNIFICANT TUNISIAN IMPORTATIONS ENVISAGED ARE 40,000 TONS PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, 10,000 TONS ANTHRACITE AND OPEN-END IMPORTS OF HEAVY CAPITAL EQUIPMENT. TUNISIAN "MISCELLANEOUS" CATEGORY EXPORTS TO USSR HAVE BEEN INCREASED TO 140,000 DINARS FROM 80,000 DINARS UNDER PREVIOUS ACCORD. DESPATCH FOLLOWS.

COMMENT: IT REMAINS BE SEEN WHETHER CONTINGENTS ESTABLISHED WILL BE FILLED.

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amembassy TUNIS

196  
DESP. NO.

October 2, 1959  
DATE

AF  
MESSAGE CENTER

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

Embassy Despatch No. 193 of September 21, 1959;

REF : CERP D-I-A-6

1959 JUL 8	ACTION 10	DEPT.	PARIS-1	ROBAT-1	MOSCOW-1	EUR-5
For Dept.	AF-5	I N F O	PARIS-2	120-8 Rep-1	E-7	L-2
Use Only	REC'D 10/6	OTHER	CIA-10	Com-10	AG-8	IN-7
					TR-3	FRB-3
						USA-10

SUBJECT: Tunisian-Soviet Commercial Agreement - Comment

The four man Soviet delegation that arrived in Tunis on September 10 for the purpose of renegotiating the Tunisian-Soviet Commercial Agreement which had expired on June 30, was greeted by Tunisian Secretary of State for Finance and Commerce Ahmed MESTIRI. In itself, this was an unusual honor since cabinet rank Tunisian officials have not customarily greeted trade delegations. Press coverage of the group's arrival and of the negotiations which lasted for eleven days was extensive. "La Presse" of September 12 opined that "... the Tunisia-U.S.S.R. Commercial Agreement will be inspired by the new Tunisian policy in the matter of foreign commerce" and, following the signature of the accord, Secretary Mestiri, speaking for the Tunisian Delegation, noted that "... increase of exchanges constitutes a stone in the construction of the edifice of friendship between the two countries". The Soviets for their part were restrained. The response of Mr. PANKRATOV to the "edifice of friendship" speech of Mestiri merely thanked the Tunisian Minister for his kind words and said that the U.S.S.R. was happy to be offered the opportunity to assist in the "equipping of Tunisia". He concluded with a traditional diplomatic phrase referring to the signature of the new agreement as "... a new and important step in reinforcing of the ties already existing between the two countries".

The Soviet delegation was headed by the Vice-Minister for Foreign Commerce Pankratov (fnu) and included Messrs. KOVALOV, KOUSMINE, FYCHIKOV and Konstantin PARMENOV, the latter being the Chief of the Permanent Soviet Commercial Mission in Tunisia. One SYCHICHITOV acted as secretary-interpreter of the delegation.

The Tunisians for their part were represented by Secretary Mestiri, Chedli TNANI (Sous-Directeur) Chief of Foreign Finance and Commerce; Hamouda HADDAD, Deputy Director of Agriculture; Zine HAJERI, Chef du Service of Foreign Commerce; Moncef GHARIANI, Chef de Service of Commerce; Moncef GUEN, Chef of the Economic Section of the Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs; Saddok LASRAM, Chef de Service of Mines, Industry and Energy; Abdelaziz LASRAM, Chef de Service of the Plan and Ali HEDDA of the Tunisian Central Bank.

The fact that the Tunisian Delegation contained specialists covering all of the principal segments of the Tunisian economy was indicative that Tunisia sought to make a real effort to find exports which might be suitable for Soviet needs. These efforts however seem to have borne little fruit since the list of Tunisian exports to the Soviet Union under the new accord has only been increased by two

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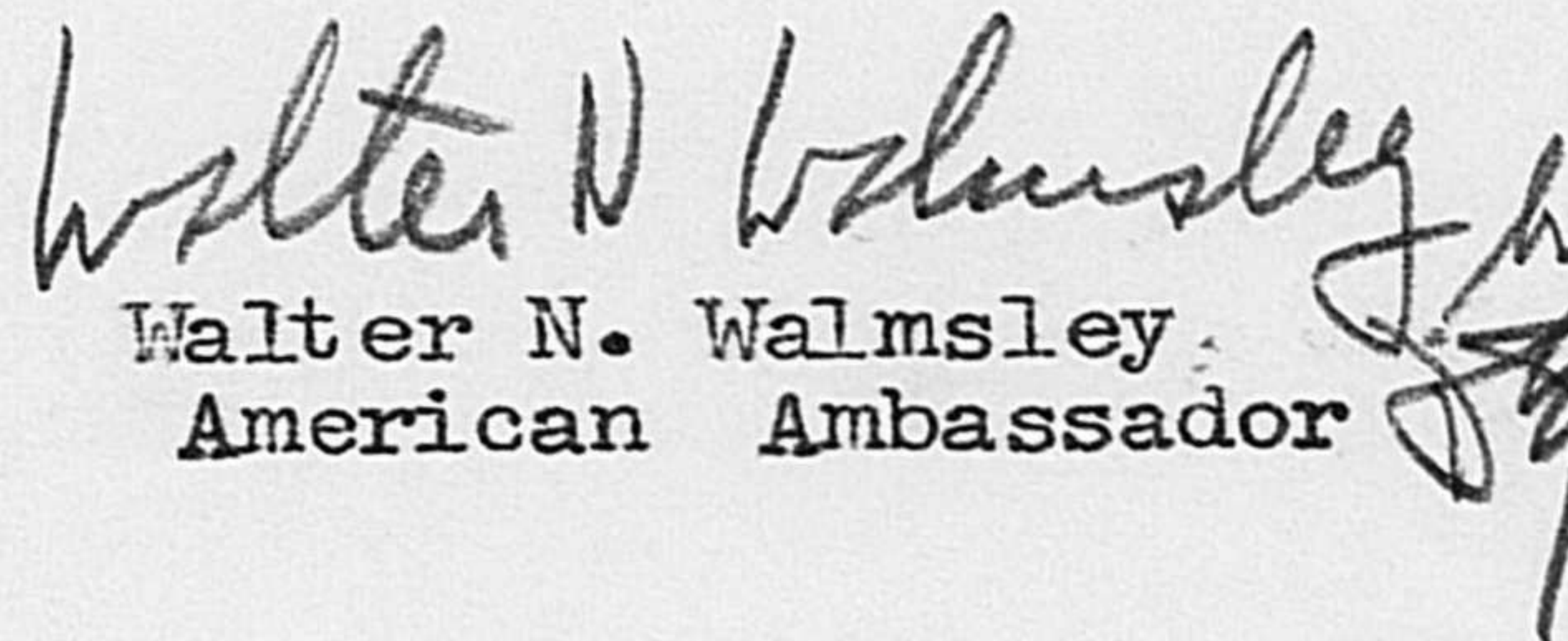
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Desp. No. 196  
From Tunis

items, i.e. handicrafts and shoes, over those contained in the previous agreement. The U.S.S.R. will take no Tunisian phosphates, mineral products, wine or durum wheat and Soviet olive oil imports envisaged by the new accord have only gone up from 2,000 to 2,500 tons. On the other hand, the list of planned Tunisian imports from the U.S.S.R. has been increased by five items: heavy capital equipment, matches, anthracite, bicycles, and clocks and watches. It is difficult to determine the exact valuation of the exchanges under the 1959 agreement since the contingents for many items are expressed in quantity rather than by value. However, according to press reports, exchanges under the new agreement are expected to reach one million dinars. This would be approximately twice the current volume of Soviet-Tunisian trade. Trade with the Soviet Union last year amounted to .4% of Tunisia's total foreign commerce.

If any offers of financial aid to Tunisia were made by the Soviet Delegation we have not heard of them. The attitude of the Soviet Delegation seemed to indicate that the Soviet Government was not anxious to give now any important commercial advantages to the Tunisian Government as long as the latter remains oriented toward the West. The GOT which has featured the fact that the new accord was the first such commercial agreement to be renegotiated since the conclusion of the new Franco-Tunisian Commercial Agreement on September 5, has undoubtedly been motivated by the desire to make a nod toward President BOURGUIBA's rather vague "disengagement" policy. The GOT finds such gestures useful from time to time to meet criticism that Tunisia is a creature of the West.

  
Walter N. Walmsley  
American Ambassador

cc: USOM/Tunis

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